Witness Says Sirhan In

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LOS ANGELES (AP) — Sirhan Bishara Sirhan assassinated Sen. Robert F. Kennedy while in a self-induced trance, a psychiatrist testified Monday. The opinion was based on a reenactment of the slaying by Sirhan under hypnosis, the doctor said.

Sirhan's first thought as Kennedy came near, the witness said, was that he wanted to shake the senator's hand—but when Kennedy got next to him he compulsively drew his gun and fired. "It was a startling experience—it was very real and dramatic," said Dr. Bernard Diamond of the mental rerun of the shooting as acted out by the 25-year-old Arab-born Sirhan.

The defense at Sirhan's first-degree murder trial offered to put him under hypnosis before the jury trying him for his life, but Superior Judge Herbert V. Walker vetoed the idea.

Dr. Diamond, professor of psychiatry and criminology at the University of California in Berekely, said he asked the violently anti-Zionist Sirhan in one hypnotic session: "Are you the only person involved in the Kennedy shooting?"

"He paused," Diamond said. "Then he said yes."

The reason advanced by Sirhan, Diamond said, was that Kennedy had advocated the sale of 50 jet bombers to Israel while the New York senator was campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The sallow, jockey-sized Sirhan doodled on a pad during part of Diamond's testimony, but seemd to regain interest when the doctor related a hypnotic session in the defendant's jail cell Jan. 26.

Trance When RFK Shot

The graying psychiatrist said he put Sirhan into a hypnotic state by dangling a 25-cent piece before the defendant's eyes.

In his subconscious, Diamond said, Sirhan found himself back in the kitchen area of the Ambassador Hotel. The time was about 12:17 a.m. June 5, 1968. Kennedy was leaving a rally of supporters who had celebrated his victory in the California Democratic primary.

Diamond continued: "He was just standing there when Sen. Kennedy and a crowd with Sen. Kennedy entered from the other side and, in Sirhan's words: 'They rushed at me.'

"Sirhan's first thought was that he wanted to shake hands with Kennedy. Kennedy's bodyguard passed Sirhan and then Sirhan was in almost physical contact with Sen. Kennedy and he shot and killed the senator."

"Do it over again," Diamond said he commanded the hypnotized Sirhan. "Sen. Kennedy's here. He's coming toward you."

Enunciating clearly and facing the jury as he might a class in criminology, Diamond went on: "Sirhan simply pulled an imaginary gun out of his left belt and he fired it compulsivley over and over again and shouted, 'You son of a ——.' "This was the first indication from any source confirming what actually happened.

"It was a startling experience. I jumped. It was very real and dramatic," Diamond said. "The expression on his face was most violent and distorted. He started to choke, actually experiencing the choking that occurred when they held him down and took away the gun.